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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7238
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHIN/AIT TAIPEI PRIORITY 0039
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0799
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUCPDOC/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISI/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 000045

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR P, NEA/FO, NEA/IR, NEA/ELA, CA/OSC/ASC/NESA
NSC FOR SHAPIRO/MCDERMOTT, ROSS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/14/2020

TAGS: CASC IR MOPS PGOV PHUM PREL PROP SY

SUBJECT: SARG CONFIRMS RAISING AMCIT HIKERS WITH IRANIAN FM

REF: A) 09 STATE 13038 B) 09 DAMASCUS 884 (NOTAL) C)
DAMASCUS 0041

Classified By: CDA Charles Hunter, Reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Hussam A'ala, chief of staff to Vice Foreign Minister Faisal Miqdad, called DCA to the MFA on January 14 to confirm that the SARG had raised the case of Joshua Fattal, Shane Bauer and Sarah Shourd, the three American hikers detained in Iran since July 31, with Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki during the latter's visit to Damascus on January 11.

¶2. (C) According to Ala'a, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallim, acting on the USG request conveyed to the SARG on December 23 (refs A and B), communicated to Mottaki the SARG's wish that the matter be solved "on a humanitarian basis." Muallim also shared with his Iranian counterpart his belief that Iran's compliance with this request would be viewed as a "confidence-building measure." Mottaki undertook to convey Syria's request to Tehran for consideration.

¶3. (SBU) Post will immediately report any further developments on this matter the SARG informs us of.

HUNTER